

Page -8-

CLAIMS

1. Lace-up device adapted to equip a footwear (CH), which comprises two portions (12a, 12b) to be brought closer to one another, including:

5 a tightening zone (16) comprising return elements (50a-54a and 50b-54b) positioned on the portions (12a, 12b),

a linkage (15), including two ends (15c, 15d) and connecting, along a predetermined travel, at least two return elements (50a, 50b) arranged on different portions (12a, 12b), which forms a loop (2) located outside the tightening zone (16),

10 a means (20, 21, 22, 23) for locking the linkage (15), characterized in that it includes a gripping device (1) arranged on the linkage (15), at the level of the loop (2), enabling the user to pull efficiently on the linkage (15) with at least one hand (M).

2. Lace-up device according to claim 1, characterized in that the gripping device 15 (1) comprises a rigid frame (3) making it possible to distribute the tension of the linkage (15) over the hand (M) of the user.

3. Lace-up device according to claim 2, characterized in that the frame (3) comprises a contact surface (4) complementary of at least three fingers (25x, 25y, 25z) of the hand (M).

20 4. Lace-up device according to one of claims 1-3, characterized in that the gripping device (1) includes hooking means (5c, 5d) adapted to cooperate with the two ends (15c, 15d) of the linkage (15) thus closing the loop (2).

5. Lace-up device according to one of claims 1-4, characterized in that the locking means (23) is integrated into the return elements (50a, 50b) positioned at the 25 junction of the tightening zone (16) and of the loop (2), in order to maintain the tension in the tightening zone (16).

6. Lace-up device according to one of claims 1-5, characterized in that the tightening zone (16) includes at least two zones (16c, 16f) separated by at least one return element (52a, 52b) positioned on each of the portions (12a, 12b), and in that the locking 30 means (22) is integrated into the return elements (52a, 52b) in order to maintain the tightening tension in the lower tightening zone (16e), which is separated from the gripping device (1) by said return elements (52a, 52b).

7. Lace-up device according to claim 6, characterized in that the return elements (52a, 52b, 53a, 53b), located in the lower tightening zone (16c), include guiding means

Page -9-

adapted to prevent the linkage (15) from escaping during the loosening.

8. Lace-up device according to one of claims 6-7, characterized in that the return elements (50a, 50b, 51a, 51b), located in the upper tightening zone (16f), are of the hook type making it possible to manually position the linkage (15) in the return element
- 5 (50a, 50b, 51a, 51b).

9. Lace-up device according to one of claims 1-8, characterized in that the linkage (15) is flexible and substantially non-stretching.

10. Lace-up device according to one of claims 1-9, characterized in that the locking means (20) is integrated into a locking element (21) that is slidably mounted on the
- 10 loop (2).

09926086-091991